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Declassified Case: NW# 78134 Date:
08-25-2025

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THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

MEMORANDUM OF TELEPHONE CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: Telcon with President of Russia

PARTICIPANTS: The President
President Putin

Interpreter: Peter Afanasenko
Notetakers: Tina Yarmchuk, Jeff Houle,
Danielle Phillips, and Al Guarnieri

DATE, TIME September 6, 2002, 7:37-7:55 a.m. EDT
AND PLACE: Oval Office

The President: Vladimir, how are you? (U)

President Putin: Fine. How are you, George? (U)

The President: Your English is much better, I can tell. (U)

President Putin: I am trying to talk to you in the same
language. (U)

The President: I'm doing very well, thank you, and I hope you are, too. I want to just briefly tell you, one, that I'm giving a speech to the United Nations on Thursday, and after the speech, I want to have a long, secure discussion with you about our mutual concern. I'm going to make the case that Saddam Hussein is still a serious threat to peace and stability and a threat to not only the region, but to countries like myself; and implicit in my speech is that he's a threat to countries like yourself, Vladimir. Secondly, I'm going to remind the UN that Saddam has totally ignored every resolution from the Security Council, and therefore has diminished their capacity to bring peace. And finally, Vladimir, you need to know no decision has been made, and I look forward to talking to you on a personal basis on this issue because you're an important part of the international scene and an important part of what might or might not go on at the UN. I value your friendship, and I know your country has financial interests involved, and I will gladly talk to you about that on a more secure line about my view, although I think you know my view. But I would like to discuss it with you personally. This

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Classified by: Stephen E. Biegun

Reason: 1.5(d)

Declassify on: 09/06/12

is the beginning of a series of talks and consultations with a close friend. (S)

President Putin: Thank you, George. I'm very glad to hear you and talk to you person-to-person. It is an important issue indeed. Initially I wanted to call you on September 11th to commemorate the tragedy, but now we are speaking specifically about Iraq. I just finished a long talk with Tony Blair. Judging by what I can hear about your Secretary of State's speeches and our Foreign Ministry, their positions are very similar. Both Russia and the U.S. are in favor of getting the UN inspectors allowed back into Iraq, and both countries are for the non-resumption of Iraqi weapons of mass destruction programs. We have worked with the Iraqis for a long time and have been pushing for them to make these decisions. And recently, the Iraqi foreign minister visited and had a meeting with our Foreign Minister Ivanov, and he said that Iraq is ready to substantively discuss the issue of inspections. And also in Johannesburg, the Iraqis made similar statements. In principle, I cannot rule out that it is just a trick by the Iraqi leadership, an attempt to drag this out. I believe we should respond with two main points. First, we should demonstrate the unity of our views and approaches. (S)

The President: Yes. (U)

President Putin: And second, we should continue to pressure them to minimize their possibilities to maneuver and minimize their room for making decisions. (S)

The President: Yes. Excellent. (U)

President Putin: And third, we should not give them the right to dictate to us and impose their conditions on us. (S)

The President: Excellent. (U)

President Putin: I would like to draw your attention to that point, which is extremely important. We should not let Iraq dictate to us their conditions. Such conditions should be elaborated and prepared by us jointly. And it is important not only for the case of Iraq, but also for the future of the world and the world of our children. It is important and possible to develop our common position in the UN Security Council and P5. (S)

The President: Yes, that is what we are trying to do. (S)

President Putin: We shouldn't believe that we have already exhausted all political and diplomatic methods to resolve this

problem. I would like to take this opportunity to emphasize that we also have other concerns, not only Baghdad. That is not the only source of evil. In Georgia, things there are no better for us in Pankisi Gorge. For instance, we have noticed there are Arab mercenaries there, and we even recently caught a Japanese fighter there; so there are people there from other countries. I will not hide from you that I have just recently read a report by one of our security services, and this report says that your Third Secretary at the U.S. Embassy in Baku, Katerina Pannos, has been helping Chechens infiltrate from Azerbaijan to Georgia, providing all possible assistance and is actually providing training and instructions for the Chechen militants. (S)

The President: Tell me her name again. Let me write it down. (S)

President Putin: Katerina Pannos. (S)

The President: I will write that down. I can't believe that's true, but that troubles me. We will look into that. (S)

President Putin: Please check it out because these are small people who get small results, but they can interfere with big matters. Because you know they provoke our special services to help the enemies of the U.S., and who needs this? We don't need any of this. We should stop this. Our interests coincide. Though you have your own interests in the region, the security of the world is much more important. And I think we, as presidents, should stop such things on both sides and work through this issue. Going back to the main point, our views are quite similar, and we have economic interests, but we also have security interests for the entire world. We are ready to work jointly with you on this issue. Your interests are big, and we've discussed this many times, and I have reason to believe we'll always be able to agree upon this. Foreign Minister Ivanov and Defense Minister Ivanov are going to come to New York or Washington to discuss all these issues with the Secretary of State and Secretary of Defense. It will be the first meeting of the new Consultative Group for Strategy Stability. I'm grateful to you, George. I'm at your disposal, and I am ready to hear your speech and exchange views. (S)

The President: Well, friend, thank you very much. You know I value your advice, and I want to consult. I will send people to talk to our specific counterparts, and we will stay in touch. I repeat, our relationship is a very important relationship, and we can work together to make the world more peaceful. We will continue to discuss our common interests. I look forward to seeing you sometime. Thank you for the call, and give my best to Ludmila and the girls. (S)

(President Putin: Please give my best regards and wishes to your wife and your children. Thank you so much for this call. (U)

The President: Thank you. (U)

President Putin: Thank you. Goodbye. (U)

The President: Goodbye. (U)

-- End of Conversation --